DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Geographic News Bulletin

This bulletin is issued weekly by the Department of the Interior. The information in it is obtained from the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, Washington, D. C.

CONTENTS FOR WEEK OF JANUARY 24, 1921

1. Bessarabia: Shaped Like a Pitcher Without a Handle
2. Mexico: A Modern Babel
3. Eugenics and Our Immigration Laws
4. How Steel Is Made
5. The Tragedy of Armenia

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A TINY LADY FROM NORWAY

The immigrants of the stock to which this little girl belongs have settled largely in the northern States of the Mississippi Valley

Tear off along this line if desired

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Bessarabia: Shaped Like a Pitcher Without a Handle

RUMANIA, since the conclusion of the World War the largest of the states of southeastern Europe, owes much of this increased area to its recent annexation of Bessarabia, previously a part of Russia.

Bessarabia, the former Russian province lying between the Prûth and the Dniester Rivers and bounded on the south by the Danube and the Black Sea, might be likened in shape to a tall, slim pitcher, without a handle. It is completely bounded by water except at a very narrow point at the mouth of the pitcher. The Dniester River forms the eastern boundary of the province. Flowing out of the crown lands of Galicia, the river runs east in general direction for approximately fifty miles. Then it turns southeast for ninety miles as the crow flies, and finally runs south of east for a hundred miles to Dniester Bay, an arm of the Black Sea, some fifteen miles from Odessa, Russia's principal port on that inland body of water. The Pruth River, flowing out of Galicia, runs east for about twenty miles, then turns southeast for a hundred and ten miles, and then slightly west of south to its confluence with the Danube.

The Vineyard of Old Russia

Bessarabia is a little smaller than Vermont and New Hampshire together. Its greatest length is 275 miles, while its greatest width is 175. It is mostly flat, except for some well-wooded off-shoots of the Carpathian Mountains in the northwest. It might be said to be the vineyard of Russia, being a great producer of wine. The population of 2,500,000 is made up of Moldavians, Little Russians, Poles, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, and Tatars. More than 2,000,000 of the inhabitants live on the soil. The capital is Kishinef, which is located almost at the center of the province. To the west of Bessarabia lies Rumanian Moldavia, and to the east the Russian Provinces of Podolia and Kherson.

Once Gateway to Byzantium

The original inhabitants of Bessarabia are believed to have been Cimmerians, after whom came the Scythians. Because it was the key to one of the approaches toward the Empire of Byzantium, the province was invaded by many successive races during the early centuries of the Christian era. Trajan incorporated it with the province of Dacia, and in the next century the Goths poured into it, to be followed in turn by the Huns, the Avars, and the Bulgarians.

In the seventh century a Thracian tribe, known as the Bessi, settled there and gave to the land its name. Between 1711 and 1812 it was the great bone of contention between the Ottoman Turks and the Russians. The Russians lost and recaptured it five times in that century. After the Napoleonic wars it was definitely annexed to Russia, and its frontier pushed southward so as to include the delta of the Danube.

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INDIAN GIRL: GUANAJUATO, MEXICO

The pure bred Indians of Mexico who have held aloof from the white man's civilization are clean, wholesome, honorable people. One who knows them and the simple dignity and sense of honor they possess cannot but lament the fate that has caused their less fortunate brethren to see and imitate the worst side of the more civilized races

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Mexico: A Modern Babel

PRESIDENT OBREGON, who has just been installed as chief executive of the Republic of Mexico, rules over a population of many tongues. This multiplicity of languages is not due to wholesale immigration as in the United States, but to a failure to "Mexicanize" a large part of the Indian population. The causes of many of the revolutions which have disturbed the progress of Mexico can be traced to this diversity of tongues and the differences in thought and ideals that necessarily follow.

"From Sonora to Yucatan, more than fifty separate dialects are spoken," writes Frederick Simpich in a communication to the National Geographic Society.

"All the inhabitants of the West Coast, however, with the exception of some hill tribes of Indians, can understand Spanish.

"Of these Indians the 8,000 Yaquis, with their crude Bacatete hill forts, their weird ceremonial masque dances and their warlike attitude, are easily most conspicuous. Many are enlisted with the federal army or employed as ranch hands and mine or railroad laborers.

Eat Meat of Donkeys

"The Yaquis with the federal troops are termed 'Manzos,' or 'tame' Yaquis; those in the hills, wild and hostile, are the 'Bronchos.' The latter are a vagrant lot, robbing ranches for food and animals, carrying rawhide drums and water gourds, wearing sandals of green cowskin—living by their wits. Pressed by hunger, they subsist as well on burros as beef.

"These burros, 'the short and simple animals of the poor,' thrive by the thousand on the West Coast. Many run wild, like 'the wild asses of Mesopotamia.'

"The Maya Indians, some of whom still carry bows and arrows, inhabit the flat coastal plain south of the Yaqui region along the River Maya. Excellent laborers, peacefully inclined, many of the Mayas are trusted helpers on American ranches and plantations.

Too Wild for the Side Shows

"Most of the well-advertised brands of wild men are fairly familiar to the show-going American public. The head-hunter, the Pygmy, the Bushman and his boomerang are all old circus acquaintances. But within 700 miles of chaste and classic Los Angeles, there dwells a lost tribe of savages whose very name is known to but few of us; for this tribe has never been tamed, 'uplifted,' or even exhibited. Yet it is older, perhaps, than the Aztecs; it may even be the last living fragment of the American aborigines.

"The Seris, these strange people are called, and they inhabit a lonely, evil rock called Tiburon (Shark) Island that lifts its hostile head from the hot, empty

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As a result of the Crimean war, Moldavia was given Dobrudja and other territory, but under the treaty of Berlin in 1878, following Russia's mastery of Turkey and the Congress of Berlin, Russia secured all of the territory east of the river Pruth. Bessarabia remained a part of Russia from that time until the dismemberment of the Czar's Empire following the Russian revolution.

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Eugenics and Our Immigration Laws

RECOGNITION by Congress that immigration constitutes one of the greatest of the after-war problems of the United States, makes timely a suggestion in regard to controlling the great influx of foreigners to this country, advanced by Dr. Alexander Graham Bell in a communication to the National Geographic Society.

"Why should not Congress provide for an ethnical survey of the people of the United States," he asks.

"We should have definite and reliable information concerning those foreign elements which are beneficial to our people and those which are harmful.

Would Apply Science to America's Melting Pot

"The problem of improving a race of human beings is a most perplexing one to handle. The process of improvement must be slow where the forces concerned act from within and are not amenable to control from without. Under the best conditions it would require several generations to produce sensible results; but in the United States we have, in the new blood introduced from abroad, an important means of improvement that will act more quickly and that is eminently susceptible to control. All the nations of the world have been contributing elements to our population; and we have now, and now only, the opportunity of studying the process of absorption before it is complete.

"The grand spectacle is presented to our eyes of a new people being gradually evolved in the United States by the mingling together of the different races of the world in varying proportions. It is of the greatest consequence to us that the final result should be the evolution of a higher and nobler type of man in America, and not deterioration of the nation.

"To this end the process of evolution should be carefully studied, and then controlled by suitable immigration laws tending to eliminate undesirable ethnical elements, and to stimulate the admission of elements assimilated readily by our population and that tend to raise the standard of manhood here."

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waters of the Gulf of California. And all down this coast the name of Tiburon is spoken with a shrug of the shoulders, for these Seris are thieves and killers. It is even whispered that long ago they were cannibals."

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How Steel Is Made

(This is the second of two articles dealing with the manufacture of steel)

IN the two years since the end of hostilities in the World War the countries suffering most from the conflict have been importing steel to the extent that their finances will permit; for this substance is needed to patch the industrial injuries inflicted by the war. Some of the important methods employed in the making of steel are described in the following communication to the National Geographic Society by William Joseph Showalter:

"An open-hearth furnace looks a good deal like an ordinary bake-oven; but when one looks in through the water-cooled door, a vast difference appears. Instead of pans of fragrant, fat loaves of baking bread, there is an imposing pool of fiery liquid as bright as the filament of a high-power tungsten lamp, so dazzling that it can be examined with safety to the eyes only by those using colored glasses. Tinted here and there with streaks of soft blue and dainty pink, it looks like melted stick candy.

Seasoning the Fiery Broth

"In preparing a battery of open-hearth furnaces for a charge, finely ground dolomite is shoveled in first. This melts like glass and fills up all cracks and crannies caused by the powerful heat of the preceding charge. Then a little train rolls up before the battery, and an electric crane dumps box after box of scrap metal from the cars into the furnaces. Off some distance is a great steel tank lined with fire-brick and full of liquid pig metal.

"When the scrap has melted and the contents of the cauldron are cooked enough; when the impurities have been driven out and tolled away, the fiery broth is 'seasoned,' as it were, with the proper amount of carbon, spiegel, ferro-manganese, tungsten, ferrosilicon, vanadium, or whatever is necessary to give the desired character to the resulting steel.

"Then comes the tapping of the furnace. An electric crane lifts a great ladle into position, a workman jams a crowbar through a clay-plugged hole at the base, and out flows the frenzied stream into the ladle. The slag rises to the top like oil on water and overflows, congealing on the outside of the ladle. Then the big crane picks up the ladle, swings it over to the pouring platform, where it in its turn is tapped and its purified fluid run off into molds.

Drop of Water Would Cause Explosion

"Great care has to be taken in handling these ladles, for the presence of a few drops of moisture when the hot metal is poured into one might cause an explosion and loss of life. Just before they receive the molten metal the ladles are heated nearly white hot in order that the steel or iron may not chill in them.

"As fast as they are filled the ladles are swung out over the ingot molds

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN OF ALL NATIONS ON ELLIS ISLAND ROOF GARDEN

Many of the poor little boys and girls who arrive at Ellis Island, where Uncle Sam's immigrants first land, do not know how American children play; but the roof garden romps one may see every fair day show that they are apt at learning

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The Tragedy of Armenia

THE plight of Armenia about the end of 1919, a condition which has been aggravated by the recent defeat of Armenian forces by Turkish Nationalists, is described in the following communication to the National Geographic Society from Melville Chater:

"Erivan, the capital of Armenia's provisional republic, is an inconceivable contrast to the Georgian government seat at Tiflis. At Erivan one finds no spacious prospect nor viceregal palace, no smart shops, Russian opera, nor gay night life. To behold misery in Tiflis, one must search it out. In Erivan one cannot escape it.

Parliament in Second-Class Theater

"This poor, straggling, dingy city of the plains, whose government offices suggest some hastily extemporized election headquarters and whose parliament chamber is rigged up with benches and cheesecloth in the auditorium of the second-class theater, boasts of but one beauty, and that—to speak in paradox—is forty miles away; for, in whatever quarter of Erivan you may be, lift your glance and great Ararat of eternal snows is seen brooding distantly over the mean streets with his aspect of majestic calm. He is the Armenian's Olympus, or rather say, the Sinai of a race which has known bondage and wilderness-wandering, and for centuries a people's imagination has turned toward him.

"The little Erivan republic has been the center of refuge for Turkish Armenians ever since the massacre of 1915, and between 200,000 and 300,000 of them are camped within its borders. As for the city itself, its former population of 40,000 has been doubled by this influx. There starvation and typhus have claimed their toll of 9,000, the death rate fluctuating between fifty and eighty a day.

A City of Dreadful Silence

"Though the doctor and I were here to observe the worst phases of the situation, each of us waited for the other to suggest a trip to the Igdir region, where we were told starvation was most acute.

"The town of Igdir, with its local and near-by populations of 30,000 Armenians, 20,000 Tatars, and 15,000 Yezidis, revealed some squalid streets with but a few people seated disconsolately here and there, as we drove in. Throughout those tortuous, sun-beaten byways no children played and no animals roamed. The air was heavy with dreadful silence, such as hangs over plague-smitten communities.

"We found the children, such as they were, inhabiting an orphanage wherein one sickened at putridity's horrible odor, and were informed that there were neither medicines nor disinfectants wherewith to allay the condition of the many little sick-beds.

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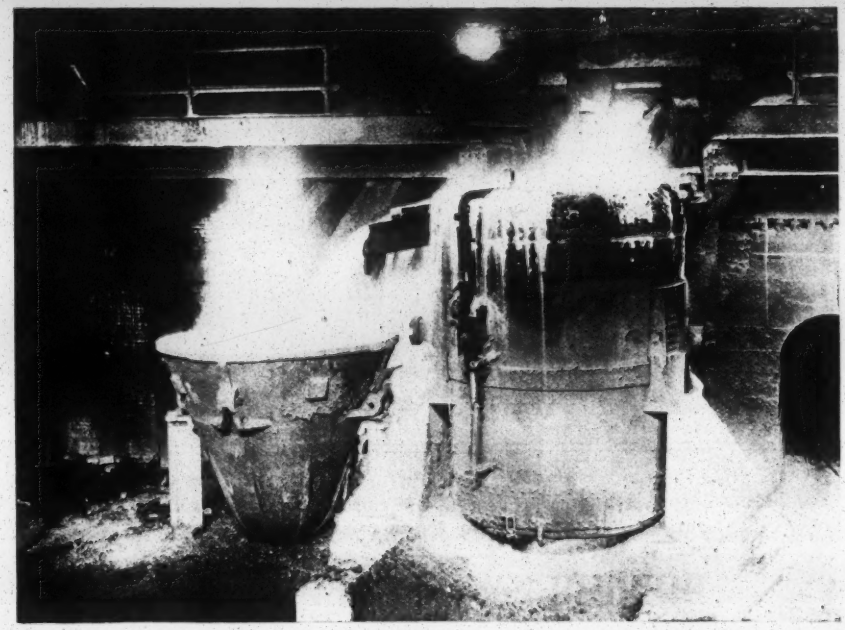
and the liquid steel is run into them and allowed to cool and take its solid form. It is as if water were poured into molds and set in a refrigerating machine to freeze into blocks of ice. The only difference is that the 'freezing' point of steel is away above the boiling point of water.

"There are two other important types of steel furnaces—the crucible furnace and the electric furnace. In both of them the idea is to keep all hurtful gases and other impurities out and to regulate the addition of alloys and oxygen destroyers to a nicety. In a crucible furnace the metal is placed in graphite clay pots, covers are put over them, and the pots subjected to great heat. Silica is gradually absorbed out of the clay in the pots and transformed into silicon by coming into contact with the carbon in the steel. The silicon in its turn absorbs the oxygen and thus quiets the frothing, foaming contents of the kettle.

"The electric furnace acts in much the same way, its heat being so pure that there is no necessity of putting the steel in covered pots to keep out gases and other impurities. An electric arc, established between huge electrodes and the surface of the slag, produces the heat in such a furnace. By varying the materials used in the formation of the slag any impurity can be wooed off and the glowing steel left as pure as crystal. The alloys are then mixed with the steel and it is made fit for any use desired. It is drawn off into ladles and poured into ingot molds, where it hardens, ready to be worked up into those things that constitute the last word in fine steel."



Photograph by Brown Brothers

TAPPING AN OPEN-HEARTH FURNACE IN A MODERN STEEL MILL

A big ladle is brought into position, a workman runs a crow-bar through the clay stopper holding back the molten metal, and it runs out like buttermilk from a churn. What slag accompanies it rises to the top as oil on water and overflows when the ladle fills up. The filled ladle is carried by a crane to ingot molds into which the molten metal is run off to harden. This is the first step in making the major portion of the country's steel

Children's Plight Heartrending

"Sick? Say, rather, the bed-ridden—a word which more justly describes those tiny, withered-up, crone-like creatures, upon whose faces the skin seemed stretched to a drumhead's tightness; whose peering eyes shot terror and anguish, as if Death's presence were already perceptible to them, and who lay there at Famine's climax of physical exhaustion. In those young, yet grotesquely aged faces, we seemed to see a long lifetime of tragedy packed into eight or ten childish years.

"The mud-huts which we visited presented an invariable picture—a barren, cave-like interior, lacking one stick of furniture or household utensil, and with a few bleached bones scattered here and there. The occupants, stretched on the clay floor, would half lift themselves to regard us with dazed and questioning eyes. Those gaunt faces, those attenuated bodies clad in a shagginess of filthy rags, seemed centuries removed from civilization. You felt that you had stumbled into prehistoric man's den during some great famine year.

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HIS PARENTS HAVE BEEN SLAIN: HE STARVES

Armenia has thousands of such pitiable children reduced to a condition close to that of wild animals. They subsist on roots and any bits of refuse they can find in the streets or fields